Tho^s Mendham
Briston Norfolk
1791

1557 Tho^s Mendham
Norfolk

Briston Norfolk
October 14th 1791

THE

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NORFOLK DIVINE,

A SATIRE.

[ADDRESSED TO A FRIEND.]

——— MONSTRUM NULLA VIRTUTE REDEMPTUM
A VITIIS ——— JUVENAL.

WITHOUT ONE SNEAKING VIRTUE IN THY TRAIN,
O PRECIOUS VILLAIN! SCOUNDREL! ROGUE IN GRAIN!

Charlotte Brereton

MDCC XCI.

NOBLOCK DIVINE

INTRODUCTION.

THE following Poem was originally written merely for the peruſal of a ſmall circle of the Author's friends and acquaintance; but many of them having expreſſed a wiſh that it might obtain a more extenſive reading, he has been induced to conſent to its publication; not from a deſire of gratifying any private pique or reſentment, but with a hope, that, by ſo doing, he may be of ſome ſervice to the cauſe of virtue.—The world, worthy Reader, is not only benefited by the exaltation of the good, but alſo by the puniſhment of the bad and vicious.

AUGUST 5th, 1791.

INTRODUCTION.

THE following Poem was originally written merely for the perusal of a small circle of the Author's friends and acquaintance; but many of them having expressed a wish that it might obtain a more extensive reading, he has been induced to consent to its publication, not from a desire of gratifying any private pique or resentment, but with a hope, that, by so doing, he may be of some service to the cause of virtue.—The world, worthy Reader, is not only benefited by the exaltation of the good, but also by the punishment of the bad and vicious.

August 5th, 1701.

THE

NORFOLK DIVINE,

A SATIRE.

[ADDRESSED TO A FRIEND.]

O Had I liv'd in thoſe renowned days
When Merit only gain'd the meed of praiſe;
When fav'ring Fortune on the learned head
Her precious gifts and valu'd treaſures ſhed;

And, but to Goodneſs and to Virtue kind,
Ne'er caſt her bleſſings to the guilty mind.
Had I been born in thoſe all-happy times,
When each deep Villain, for his impious crimes,
To meet the puniſhment deſerv'd was ſure,
'Spite of his cunning arts and looks demure;
When men from wickedneſs and vice would run,
And ſcorn the ſinner for his actions done;
When ev'ry *Teacher of Religion* ſtrove
To guide his flock in virtue, truth, and love;
To point the ~~way to happineſs and~~ God,
To tread the path himſelf his Savior trod;
To feed the hungry, to inſtruct the blind,
And live in charity with all mankind.
Had I but liv'd in that renowned age,
Ne'er had the pen of Satire touch'd my page.

But now, alas! far diff'rent ſcenes are ſhewn,
And few can claim true merit as their own;
Oft have I ſeen that Wickedneſs prevails,
And Juſtice ſlumbers with her ſword and ſcales;
Oft have I known the fav'rites of the NINE—
The Good, the Learn'd, in painful miſery pine;
Whilſt many a Fool and guilty Raſcal ſhare
Fortune's beſt gifts, and Splendor's liv'ry wear.
And I have known of late, or ſeen at leaſt,
('Shame ſuch a character befits a Prieſt!)
A Reverend Miniſter of England's Church,
Leave Virtue and Religion in the lurch;
And but to Satan and profaneneſs true,
Not one praiſe-worthy action ever do.

Deſcend O Muſe! and aid me, whilſt I ſing,
To point each line with Satire's poignant ſting.

To ſhew, deteſted by the Good and Juſt,
The Man who thus betrays his ſacred truſt!

Of whom deſcended, or from whence he ſprung,
A ſplendid manſion or a cot of dung;
It matters nothing, nor from which fam'd college
He gain'd his ſtock of ſuperficial knowledge;
But know, my Friend, he left the learned place
In dark diſhonor, and in deep diſgrace;
For many a mean and dirty action done,
Deſpis'd, contemned;—but eſteem'd by none.

As the fierce wolf, a-thirſt of fleſh and blood,
Leaves the cloſe cover of the duſky wood;
And flies, voracious to the graſſy ſteep,
Where (cloſe in fold) repoſe the tender ſheep;

Devours

Devours the lamb, quite thoughtleſs of the ſin,
And having ſlily cloath'd him in the ſkin*,
Lives with the flock, amid the ſafe retreat,
By day his playmates, and by night his meat;
So MENDAX left the academic groves,
And ſought the plunder and the prey he loves;
Cut ſhort each hair, aſſum'd the ſacred gown,
And fix'd his ſtation in a country town.

At firſt an humble Curate he became,
Unknown to Fortune, and unknown to Fame;
With cautious cunning paſs'd his early days,
And 'ſcap'd much cenſure, tho' he gain'd no praiſe.

A 'Squire was Patron of the Temple there,
(And 'Squires for ſenſe not oft renowned are);

To

* See Æſop's Fable.

To him our Hero made his ſervile bows,
His flatt'ring ſpeeches and his fawning vows,
His meek ſubmiſſion and his artful lies,
Oft praiſe and adulation vaſt ſupplies!
Nor made in vain; th' alluring bait was ſwallow'd,
The 'Squire was dup'd, the Parſon's fortune follow'd.

Ere long the Incumbent of the living dy'd,
The pleaſing Flatt'rer ſoon his place ſupply'd;
Vice was preferr'd 'fore worth and virtue dear,
And MENDAX gain'd five hundred pounds a year!

Thus, by his arts, he caught the loaves and fiſhes,
The conſtant aim and end of all his wiſhes;
Then quick aſſum'd a *Rector*'s name and ſtate,
And ſoon the *Pariſh* found their hapleſs fate.

Depend-

Dependance o'er, and crown'd with wealth and eaſe,
He harbor'd now no ſingle wiſh to pleaſe;
With front unbluſhing, caſt off all diſguiſe,
And ſtood reveal'd a *Tyrant* to their eyes;
Laugh'd at the ſounds of honor and of fame,
Nor ſtrove to keep the ſhadow of a name;
Deſpis'd the praiſes of the *few* or *many*,
And tith'd and tenth'd them to the *utmoſt penny!*

Like oaths and curſes from a boatſwain's crew,
Complaints and murmurs from each corner flew;
Peace and *Content* no more were ſeen to reign,
But *proud Oppreſſion* ſtalk'd along the plain;
Depriv'd of half the gain his labours yield,
No more the *Farmer* joyful tills his field;

Intereſt

Intereſt, the ſpur of Induſtry, is loſt,
And all his hopes and happy proſpects croſs'd.

'Stead of that worth which ſhould the man adorn,
To ſuch an holy, ſacred function born;
Envy and malice in his boſom dwell,
A ſtrong antipathy to doing well;
An eye he has that ever ſcowls at merit,
A proud, inſulting, over-bearing ſpirit;
An head quite heedleſs of his ſoul's ſalvation,
But full of cunning, craft, and litigation;
An ear that's always deaf to Miſery's moan,
A brazen forehead and an heart of ſtone!

Religion droops beneath his baneful ſway,
And ſcarcely notic'd comes the Sabbath day;

The

The injur'd Ruſtics ſhun the houſe of pray'r,
And hate to meet their vile Oppreſſor there;
With careleſs action and irreverend mien,
(Such as in noiſy Auctioneers is ſeen)
In pulpit mounted, with diſſembling face,
To half-fill'd pews he talks of truth and grace!
With quick diſpatch the ſacred form runs o'er,
As females read a *Novel* or a *Tour;*
Cares not if any are reclaim'd or mended,
And only glories when the taſk is ended:
Goodneſs and Heav'n did ne'er his thoughts employ,
For all his pleaſure, happineſs, and joy,
Is but to harraſs and diſtreſs Mankind,
And wound the feelings of each gen'rous mind;
To tear from honor'd brows the wreath of Fame,
To blaſt a character, or damn a name;

To plunge the honeſt Tenant in diſtreſs,
Inſult the wealthy, and the poor oppreſs;
To raiſe diſputes, to make a friend a foe,
And cauſe the tear of wretchedneſs to flow!

Deteſted Villain! if theſe lines you view,
And well I know you needs muſt own them true,
O let Remorſe thy canker'd bofom fill,
And turn thy purpoſes from future ill;
Remember well the awful time *muſt* come,
The hour of judgment, and the day of doom;
When each Man's deeds ſhall meet a juſt return,
The Good be happy, and the Wicked burn;
* "'Till the foul actions done in Nature's day,
"By Hell's fierce torments ſhall be purg'd away."

* Shakeſpear.

O! think

O! think what then muſt be thy dreadful ſtate!
Wide ope ſhall ſtand the hallow'd book of Fate;
There will be ſeen each *individual fault*,
Each *impious crime*, and each *ſecreted thought*;
Numbers who *ſaw* thy *ills* and *felt* thy *wrongs*,
Will then accuſe thee with upbraiding tongues;
Angels ſhall drive thee from the realms of bliſs,
And hurl thee, howling, to the dark abyſs!

Methinks, my Friend, I hear you now exclaim,
" How vile a character, how bad a name!
" Sure ſuch a wretch ne'er trod the face of earth,
" The Poet's fancy gave the Monſter birth!"
Believe me, Sir, Truth only guides my verſe,
Bad as I've painted him he is, and worſe:

No rogue e'er rode to Tyburn in a cart,
Who bore ſo vicious and ſo black an heart.
Should MENDAX then, untouch'd, unpuniſh'd go?
Goodneſs forbade it, and the Muſe ſaid "No;"
Urg'd by their dictates, I aſſum'd my pen,
To give correction to the worſt of men;
To laſh, with honeſt Satire's ſcourging rod,
The foe to Man, to Virtue, and to God!

AP 66
Boston Lynn
Norfolk

FINIS.